

11-1-1952

# Religion and Education

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest>

Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

"Religion and Education." *The Palimpsest* 33 (1952), 350-356.  
Available at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest/vol33/iss11/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the State Historical Society of Iowa at Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Palimpsest by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).



## Religion and Education

No less important than the advances in the world of business and agriculture were the forward strides Iowa made during 1951 in the fields of education and religion. Education has always been a "big business" in Iowa. In 1951 public school property alone was valued at nearly four billion dollars. Tangible religious gains could be seen in the numerous newly dedicated churches in town and country.

One problem facing Iowans was the crowded condition in public schools. Since the end of World War II, classrooms in many cities and towns were found woefully inadequate for the ever increasing number of youngsters who each September surged through school doors. A check of the statistics helped explain the situation. In 1939-1940 school children in the first three grades totaled 114,821, but ten years later 135,303 were enrolled. A typical solution was Cedar Rapids' new ultra-modern Grant Wood School, named in honor of the Iowa artist who had achieved fame as one of America's greatest painters. With a total enrollment of 485,549 in the elementary and high schools, the 9,736 school buildings in Iowa still added up to a classroom shortage. Despite



new construction, classroom space was still at a premium in many communities at the year's end.

Gone were the days when the young Iowan trudged to school through all kinds of weather. Over three thousand school buses were in operation to assist rural Iowa's education program. Another fast disappearing custom was the home-made lunch, as school cafeterias served 19,368,228 lunches during the school year. Of this number 675,338 lunches were offered either free of charge or at a reduced cost to hungry Iowa youngsters. Teacher salaries were brought in line with the national average in 1951, with kindergarten teachers in consolidated schools receiving an average of \$2,313 and women high school teachers in the larger cities averaging \$3,647, according to the Iowa State Education Association's survey.

There were other encouraging signs in the field of education in 1951. A nationwide contest launched to determine the "Best Teacher of 1951" ended with the selection of Sister Mary Edward of Dubuque's St. Columbkille's school. Sister Mary won on the testimony of Lorna Butters, her thirteen-year-old pupil who wrote that "Sister Mary makes us want to do the right thing."

The carpentry classes at Clinton high school also seemed to be doing the right thing. Students learned the use of tools, and the community was enriched by the completion of the third home built by the classes since World War II ended. Six-



teen-year-old David Albaugh of Burlington spent his after-class hours over the piano keyboard to turn out a concerto and four-part cantata. Pretty Carolyn Gibbs, a seventh-grader from Mount Union, was finally eliminated in the fifth round of the National Spelling Bee at Washington, D. C., after she spelled "consomme" with only one "m."

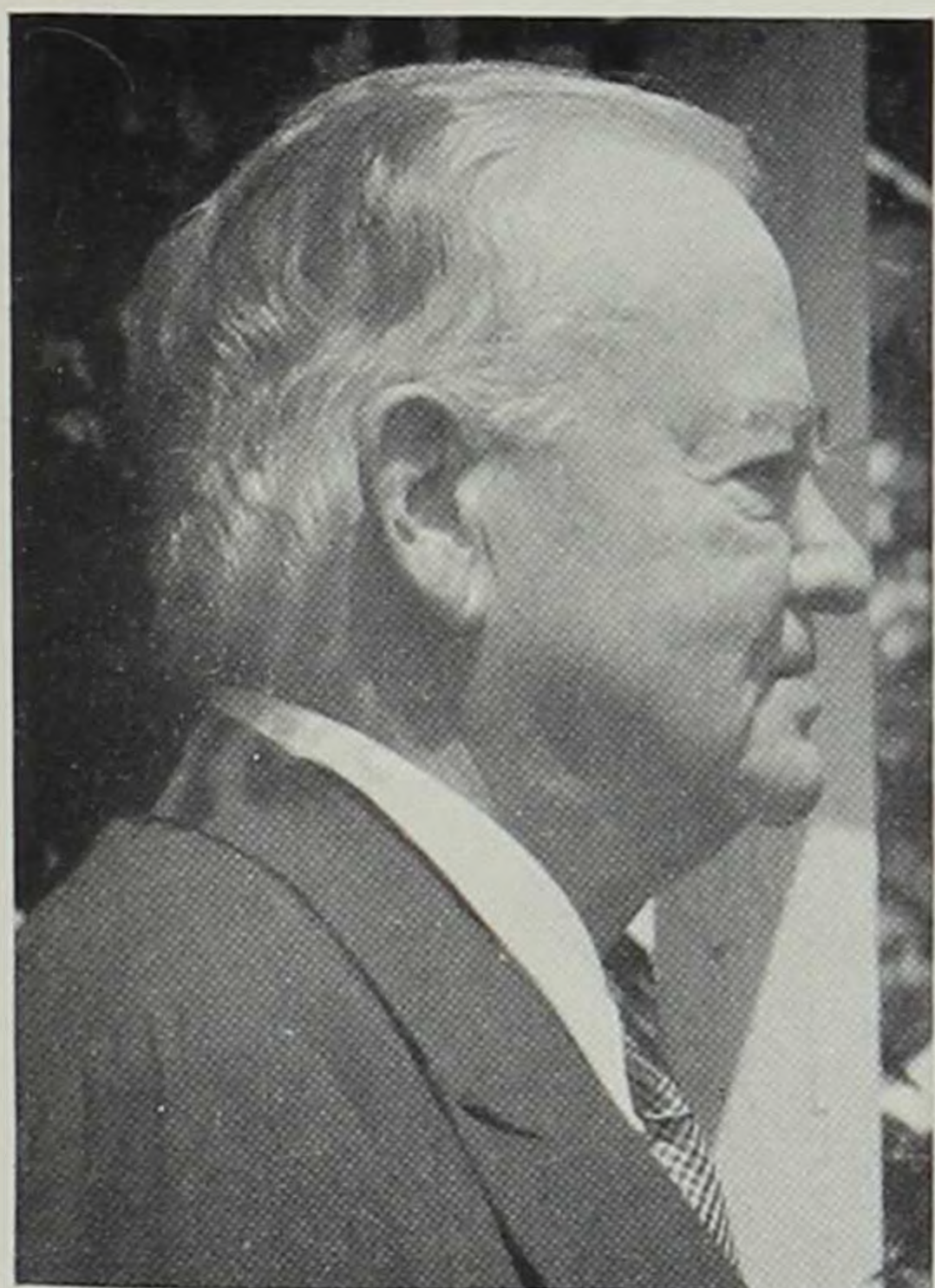
Education and young Iowa were also in the spotlight in 1951 because the wave of juvenile delinquency which swept the nation did not leave Iowa untouched. A fifteen-year-old truant shot a hunter in the back, robbed him, and spent part of the loot on a trinket for a girl friend. Offsetting such deeds were happy occurrences like that at Manning, where twelve hundred gleeful youngsters celebrated their annual Children's Day with free carnival rides and soda pop.

Higher education was not forgotten. The 54th General Assembly appropriated \$6,300,000 for both the State University of Iowa and Iowa State College. The Senate turned down a proposed "loyalty oath" measure after heated debate in which opponents of the proposal charged it would lead to "witch hunts" at state institutions.

College campuses beckoned nearly thirty thousand young Iowans in 1951, according to the Des Moines *Register* preliminary campus survey. The State University of Iowa had an enrollment of 7,362, Iowa State College had 7,250, and Iowa State Teachers College had 2,322. The enroll-



IOWA VISITORS IN 1951



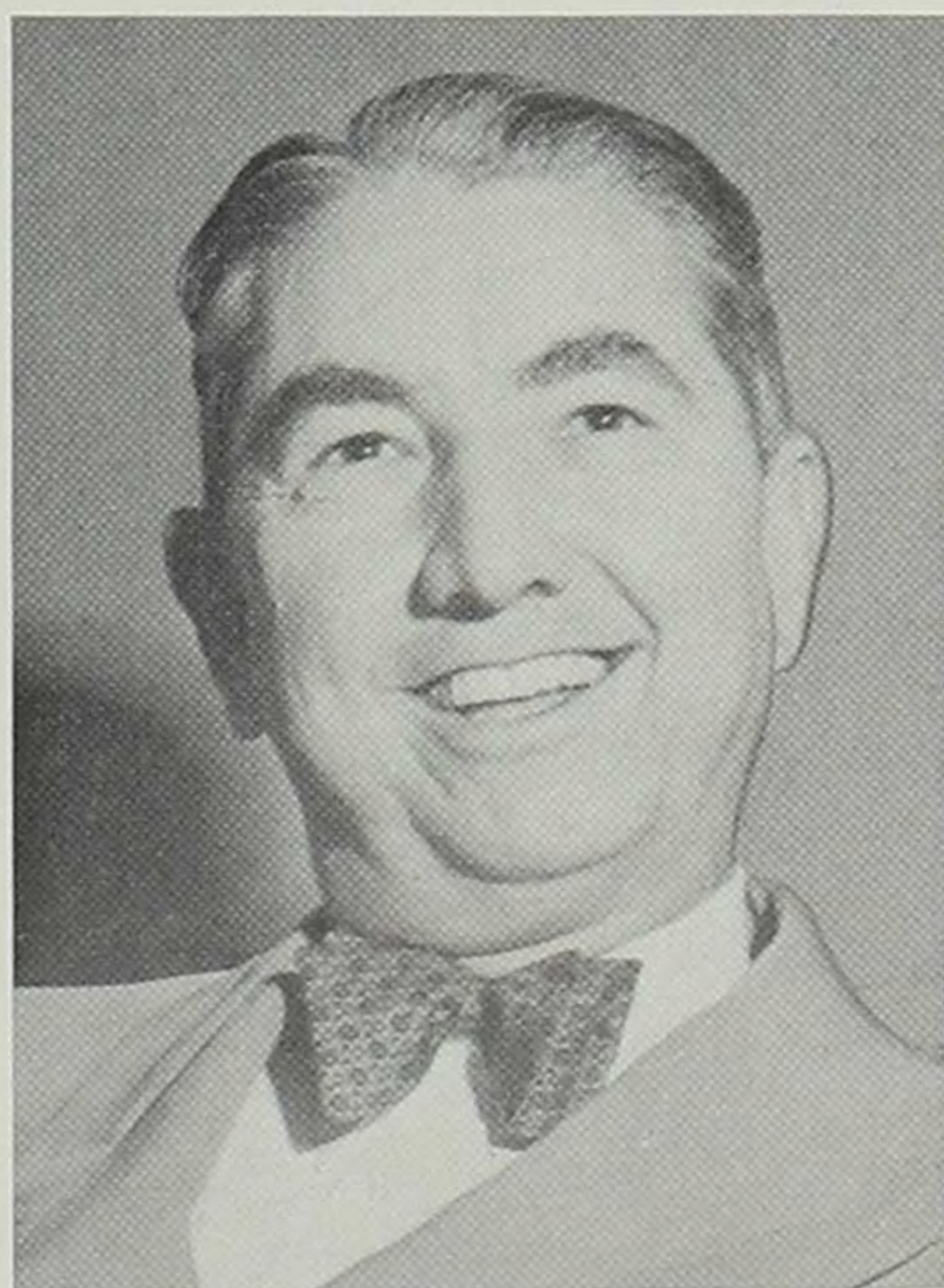
HERBERT C. HOOVER  
Ex-President of the U. S.



ROBERT A. TAFT  
U. S. Senator

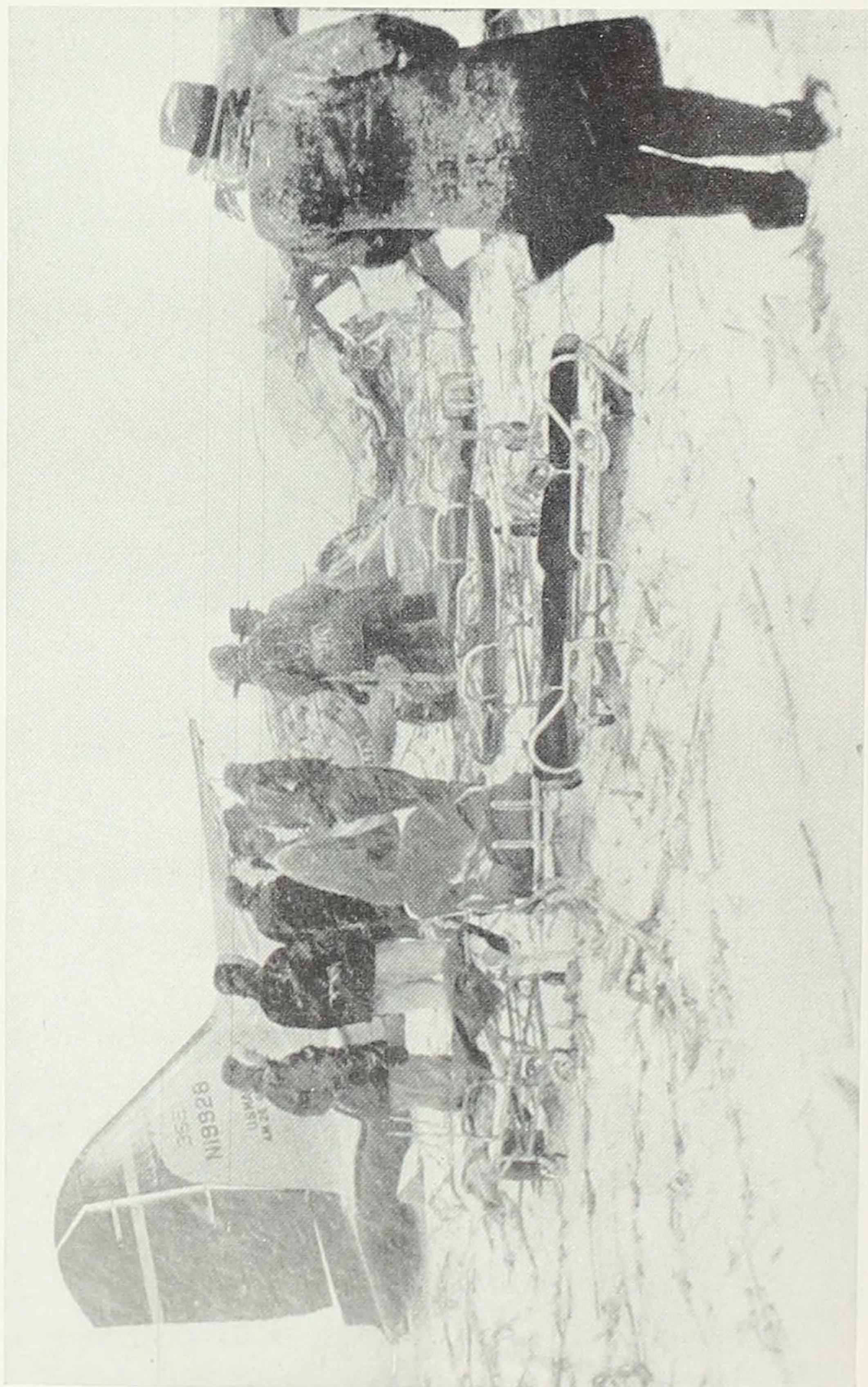


ANTHONY EDEN  
British Foreign Secretary



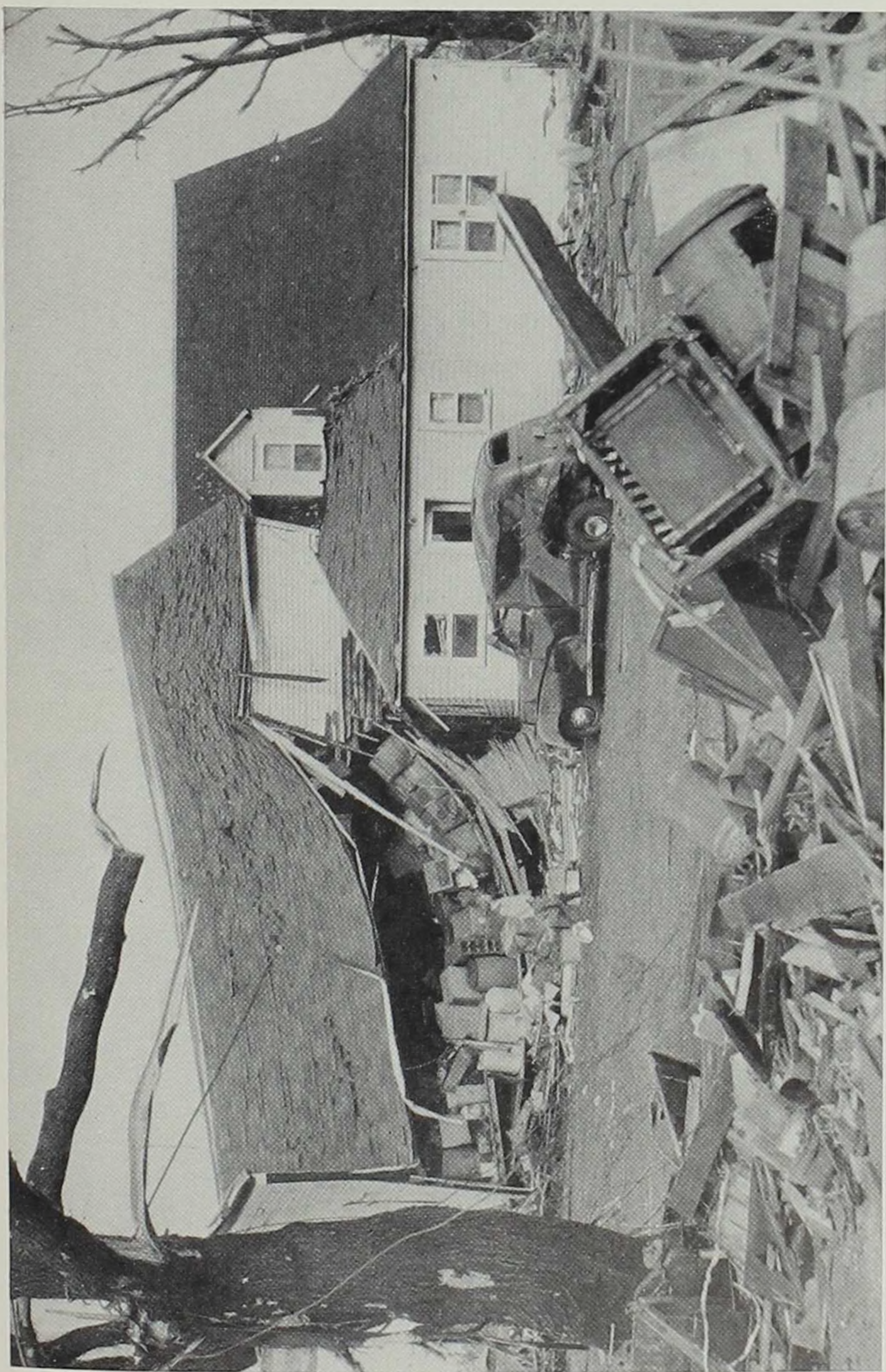
THOMAS C. CLARK  
U. S. Supreme Court Justice





Iowa's First Airline Crash Near Sioux City





The Devastating Duncan Tornado





Sister Mary Edward and Lorna Butters Surrounded by  
Admiring Young Relatives



Marilyn Maxwell Home from Hollywood  
Former Clarinda Girl Poses for Family Portrait



ment pinch which came with the decline of veteran students going to college under the "GI Bill of Rights" was marked in 1951. The state's twenty-three privately endowed or denominational colleges reported a total enrollment of 11,697 students, a considerable drop from the peak years of 1946-1948. Educators promised that the lag in enrollments would be only temporary, however, as the first of the "depression babies" born during the low birth rate years of the 1930's were beginning to enroll in college.

Several signs noted throughout 1951 indicated the Iowa collegian was more sedate than his counterpart of the 1920's. Cornell College at Mount Vernon relaxed its 1928 ban against the use of Greek letters by local fraternities and sororities, but kept a bar against national affiliations. Hundreds of draft-eligible college students took selective service qualifying examinations at stated intervals, and draft boards were notified of the scores, for "appropriate action." Julia Miller, eighty-four, announced from her Davenport home that she was only thirteen credit hours away from her bachelor's degree at the State University of Iowa. She started working on it in 1904, was delayed, and began correspondence work in 1927.

Reports of basketball "fix" scandals in neighboring states brought demands from some fans for simon-pure athletics in Iowa colleges and universities. A gridiron incident drew national atten-



tion when Drake University's all-American John Bright received a broken jaw in a game with Oklahoma A. & M. Bill Reichardt, University of Iowa fullback, brought some luster to his team's tarnished Western Conference record when he was voted the Big Ten's most valuable player, the first Iowa player to achieve the honor since the late Nile Kinnick won the award in 1939. In high school athletics, Hansell defeated favored Monona, 70-59, to capture the girls' state basketball championship. Davenport turned back a game Roland quintet, 50-40, to win the boys' trophy.

The importance of religious institutions in Iowa was re-emphasized in 1951 by the numerous church centennial celebrations. Early in the year Iowa had a taste of the evangelism which Iowa-born Billy Sunday had preached in the state four decades ago when the dynamic Billy Graham spoke to thousands who gathered in a Des Moines theater. Over 500 delegates to the Lutheran Laymen's League national convention at Sioux City heard the Reverend Lawrence Acker declare "man apparently does not want peace on earth." He told the convention the civilized world has known peace in only 227 of the 3,447 years since 1496 B. C. Peace also was an issue for two Iowans who refused to pay all of their income tax because part of the payment would support the Korean war. Federal officials auctioned off their automobiles to make up the deficit.



A public opinion poll taken among Iowans indicated the people had regained confidence in churches within a three-year span. Fifty per cent of the polled group expected churches to exert more influence in human affairs. In 1948, only 36 per cent of the people polled had expressed reliance upon the churches' role in everyday concerns. At Allerton, nine persons including the pastor were injured when a riot developed over a proposal to oust the minister. The melee took place during the regular church service, and in addition to the cuts and bruises one parishoner suffered from a heart attack. A Harlan minister and several Bible students were disillusioned when federal agents arrested a phony colonel who had promised to find a place for them in a "G-12 Corps."

Iowans who believed that even in this day of indecision certain values could be pinpointed found the term "Christian" confusing. A Black Hawk County district court declared part of the will of a Waterloo doctor was "unenforceable and invalid" because it left \$70,000 for the benefit of "persons who believe in the fundamental principles of the Christian religion and the Bible. . . ." The judge said it was asking too much of a court to decide what constituted a Christian. Judge Shannon Charlton decided it was a "metaphysical problem" beyond the bounds of the court, and left the way clear for seven heirs to claim the money.

Public libraries, which often form the core of



a community's cultural life, contributed their share to both religion and education in 1951. The Des Moines Public Library circulated 640,410 titles to book-hungry readers. Webster City's library checked out 86,662 titles; of cities with less than 5,000 population, Iowa Falls led with 65,278 titles circulated. The Iowa State Education Association began serving schools and libraries with its 2,000-volume "book-mobile" in September.

Discontent over national politics caused some ruffles in Iowa's 1951 religious pattern. When President Truman announced he had appointed an ambassador to the Vatican, Senator Guy M. Gillette indicated he would oppose the move as a violation of the historic separation of church and state functions in America. The appointment never reached the Senate for confirmation, however. The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist conference approved a resolution denouncing the federal internal security act as a measure calculated to undermine personal liberty.

The Iowan of 1951 understood, as his ancestors before him had, that religion and education would form powerful molds for the future character of the prairie state. Still confident that a God-fearing, educated people would be better equipped to work out their destiny, Iowa clung to her old traditions in a fast moving 1951 society.

ROBERT RUTLAND